

Steve Zappe

ENTERED

From: Ben Walker [bwalker@pccnm.com]
Sent: Monday, November 01, 2004 3:23 PM
To: steve_zappe@nmenv.state.nm.us
Subject: Comments on draft additional panels Permit



Class 3 draft permit
adding pa...

It is a rainy, cold, miserable day in Carlsbad, so I had to, much against my inclinations, perform an indoorsy thing. Hence, attached is a letter describing the (minor) comments I have on the draft WIPP HWFP to allow mining and use of additional HWDUs. In general, the draft is in line with the original conception of WIPP progress (except for the timing of events) and makes the HWFP changes with conciseness and precision.

The Farmer's Almanac indicates that a similarly nasty day can be expected in early November of 2035. Could you arrange for the comment period on the draft permit for the Section 311 PMR to take place at that time?



October 15, 2004

2701 Eunice Street
Carlsbad, NM 88220

Mr. Steve Zappe
NMED Hazardous Waste Bureau
2905 Rodeo Park Drive East, Building 1
Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87505

REF: Panels Expansion Draft Permit

Dear. Mr. Zappe:

A brief review of the proposed draft WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit to allow the construction and use of the additional Hazardous Waste Disposal Units (HWDUs) at the WIPP indicates that it appears to conform with the original planning of the WIPP, other than the changes in the timing of specific events in the course of operations.

However, there is an anomaly in this timing that the NMED may wish to examine more closely (if it haven't been considered already). In the draft Permit Attachment I, Table I-1 is altered to represent the latest DOE expectations for earliest panel closures. The last of these (Panel 10) is now expected to begin closure in July of 2018, rather than "0" of 2024 as is listed in the current Permit. However, Table I-2 still lists the initialization of time of overall repository closure as the August 2024 date. While there may be some delay to the closure of panel 10 (as noted in footnote 4 to Table I-1), the repository closure activities listed in Table I-2 should commence as soon as technically feasible after the closure of panel 10, as is clearly the intent in the current Permit. Six years should not be an acceptable time lag, and the Permit should not be interpretable as accepting that lag, even when the events will take place under another permit.

There is a second anomaly concerning WIPP disposal timing. Another current DOE document does not show agreement with schedules shown in Tables I-1 and I-2. The National TRU Waste Management Plan, Revision 3 (DOE/NTP-96-1204; currently on the CBFO web site) states in the Executive Summary that WIPP operations is to (p. 9):

...Reduce risk by completing the legacy contact handled (CH)-TRU waste disposal by 2013 (about 20 years early with a continuing mission of disposing of newly generated waste until 2035).

Note that 2035 is over a decade later than the Permit-proposed repository closure beginning in 2024. The shipment schedules shown in Chapter 5 (Table 5.0-1 for CH-TRU and Table 5.0-2 for RH-TRU) reinforce this; only 14 shipments of CH-TRU are to arrive after 2013 (7 in each of FY 2014 and 2015), but about 700 shipments of RH-TRU are scheduled to arrive after 2013 (67 in each of FY 2014 and 2015), through to 2031. According to Table 5.0-2, 494 shipments of RH-TRU would arrive after FY 2018, the earliest date for closure of Panel 10 in the proposed

Appendix I, and 53 RH-TRU shipments would arrive after FY 2024, when initiation of repository closure is to commence according to the draft Appendix I. These are significant differences between the two documents which would seem to indicate questioning of the DOE before including this draft into the HWFP.

The information in these Management Plan Tables also may be inconsistent with the proposed method of disposing of RH-TRU described in the DOE/WTS permit modification request (PMR) for RH-TRU disposal at the WIPP. The only method described in that PMR was to place RH-TRU canisters in the walls of CH-TRU disposal areas prior to CH-TRU emplacement. However, the two Management Plan Tables show that the CH-TRU would all be in place before approximately 700 RH-TRU shipments were received. It may be that the DOE still intends to place these RH-TRU shipments in the walls, but that appears to be a rather inefficient and overly expensive process when some form of installation into the open panel followed by backfill would eliminate the hazards, equipment use, and time lost for wall emplacement. The NMED may want to question the DOE on this issue, to ensure that the RH-TRU PMR accurately reflects DOE planning.

Sincerely,

Ben Alvin Walker